



# MRSA

## (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA is a disease caused by a type of bacteria. This type of bacteria is called Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus). S. aureus or “staph,” are bacteria that are often carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people.

- Some S. aureus are resistant to certain types of antibiotics, such as methicillin.
- MRSA is now a problem for everyone, not just for persons in hospitals and nursing homes.
- Groups at higher risk of getting MRSA include:
  - Intravenous drug users
  - Persons who have been in prison
  - Persons living in group housing situations

### How is MRSA spread?

#### MRSA can be spread in the following ways:

- Direct physical contact with infected people
- Touching objects (such as towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, workout areas, or sports equipment) that have touched the skin of an infected person
- MRSA isn't spread through the air

### What are the symptoms?

#### Symptoms include:

- A painful, red area of skin, sometimes with a raised bump or hard area.
- Skin infections such as abscesses, also called boils (pus-filled tissue), which may often look like a spider or bug bite.
- Fevers and chills

### How is MRSA treated?

#### Skin infections can be very painful and even dangerous, if not treated properly.

- If you have a skin infection, go see your doctor to have it examined. Ask your doctor to do a culture of your skin infection.
- Cover all skin infections with clean bandages, especially if they are draining or producing pus.
- If your doctor gives you antibiotics, make sure you take all of them. If the infection doesn't start getting better within 2-3 days, go back to the doctor.

## How do you prevent MRSA?

If you or someone you live with has MRSA, take the following precautions:

- Don't share clothes, towels, soap, sheets and blankets, razors or other personal items with others.
- Wash towels and sheets regularly. All clothing and bedding items should be cleaned in hot water with detergent. Heat dry the items instead of air drying them.
- Use gloves when handling dirty laundry.
- Keep bathrooms and other common areas clean using a strong cleaning agent. This includes toilet seats. Persons with infections in their rectal or genital area should use paper seat covers or clean the toilet seat after every use.
- Read attached information sheet on proper cleaning solutions and techniques.
- Use plastic or metal chairs that can be cleaned properly in bathroom areas. For wooden chairs, use a waterproof paint or cover the wooden surface with a clean cloth or paper.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and hot water, before and after:
  - Any physical contact with someone
  - Using the bathroom
  - Eating, and at least once every 2 hours
- Wash hands properly. Refer to the attached sheet for proper hand washing instructions.
- Shower with soap at least once a day.

## More information on MRSA

MRSA cases **do not** have to be reported to the county.

### For more information about MRSA:

- Call the County of San Diego County Community Epidemiology Branch at (619) 515-6620.
- Go to the following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website address:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/Aresist/ca\\_mrsa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/Aresist/ca_mrsa.htm)
- Los Angeles County  
<http://lapublichealth.org/acd/MRSA.htm>

# Use of Disinfectants

- Check the product's label to be sure that the disinfectant is the right one for the type of surface being treated.
  - For example, vinyl, plastic, glass, wood, etc.
- Check that the product label says *Staphylococcus aureus*.
  - Many disinfectant products sold by grocery stores and other businesses will have a label indicating that they work on *Staphylococcus aureus* and other bacteria.
  - The label may just say it works on *Staphylococcus* or "Staph" bacteria. This is also acceptable.
- Make sure that the disinfectant is prepared properly.
  - The label should say the appropriate amount for the disinfectant (For example, a half-cup per gallon).
  - The label should also say the amount of time the disinfectant should be left on a surface to work properly.